

Episode 94 - Tips for Taking the Time Off as a Business Owner

[00:00:00] All right. Hi everyone. Welcome back to the Business Growth Advantage, Joey. Let me kick us off today. And I just wanted to say, Joey, welcome back. I know you've been back for like two weeks [00:01:00] now or so, but this is our first show together since you got back. So I'm so excited to hear all about it and see what we can share with everyone.

Man, I have missed you, Liz. I have missed everybody in the group, , to everybody tuning into the podcast. , thank you for your patience and your understanding and , man. I know that we talk about the importance of taking time off and vacations and stuff, but, , this was really , my first vacation as a business owner where I totally unplugged.

And now that I'm back, I realize how helpful it really was to take that time off. I love it. And you said like, How much would you say you worked or checked your email while you were gone on like a daily or weekly basis? Yeah. Okay. Thank you for asking that because , I think that sometimes people can get so caught up in.

like wanting to have something to say to their friends when they get back from a [00:02:00] vacation that like, sounds good. And so the way that I defined being unplugged this time was not 100%. I didn't do anything business related. , but what it looked like was I didn't bring my laptop, I didn't check my emails.

and all that I did was I created a spreadsheet between me and my, , my main executive assistant that I work closely with. And the idea was that, , only she could send me messages either through that spreadsheet or through Slack. And so I spent. No more than 30 minutes each morning, and usually it was just like a five minute check, , going through whatever escalated questions or concerns she had for me, responding to those and then being done and spending time with my family.

, giving my mother-in-law an amazing bucket list trip in Portugal, and then seeing all of my, , distant cousins and aunts and uncles [00:03:00] instantly for a week and a. Oh my gosh. So cool. So what was like, going through your mind? Did you feel like you were waiting for big news when you would log in the morning?

Were you like, it's way too quiet? what kind of thoughts were you having? Well, , I will say that , I highly recommend if this is something that you are wanting for your business. , and maybe you haven't taken vacation before, or you have taken vacation, but you've basically just been working the whole time.

, This very much was that extra step of what a time off vacation would look like. And so there were periods of me taking time off in the past that were just kind of certain degrees closer to what I had this most recent time. And so that did make this feel somewhat smoother because it wasn't a. A total, , sense of Joey's taking time off for the first time in the company.

We all need to be prepared for that. Plus , we've gotten to a point [00:04:00] where even when I'm not on vacation, I'm usually only spending less than an hour a week doing client work anyways. And so, , it's funny cuz the first couple of weeks or the weeks before I went to vacation, I was having these conversations with my team and I was like, You guys, like if you have any concerns for me, let me know.

How are you all feeling? And they were like, Joey, we're fine. Like this isn't gonna be hard. . . And so I think. That says a lot of, , if you're going to do this and really feel like you, both, you and your team can have peace of mind with you away. , do what you can to delegate and automate, , even when you're not on vacation.

Yeah, that's what I was gonna say. Having like those little practice scenarios or days off, I think is huge to be able to set yourself up for two weeks. Yeah. Yeah, it was great. And it also , was really nice to, a big thing that we had this quarter. So my team works in terms [00:05:00] of quarters and Q3 just ended.

, our big goal for Q3 was for everybody that's currently on our leadership team to get out of the weeds on most of the activities. That they were doing that were not leadership team related. Mm. So that really helped the leadership team effectively lead while I was gone because they themselves weren't getting caught up in the weeds of certain types of work.

Yeah. Yeah. , and I'm kind of a distant team member, but I'm in Slack and everything and I have to say like it didn't feel different, while you were gone. I knew you were gone kind of on a friend level and we weren't gonna have the show, but as far as like the sales team and things getting done, it just was like same old, same old.

Yeah. You know, it's interesting cuz , I have a lot of business owner friends. Have kids and particularly young kids. , and , I don't, but I really love being in conversations where business [00:06:00] owners are talking about this. And I learn a lot, , even though it's just me and Cat and then , the dog and the cat.

, but we, I've been a part of a lot of conversations where, , parents are talking openly about, there's a lot of stuff. that we do when we're with our kids. Where when we are seeing that our kids are depending on us for certain things. Mm-hmm. , that can feel really good, even though it might not be the best for their.

Long term independence as they're growing up. Yeah, and I think that there's a similar thing that can happen with your business if you keep this mindset of your business being your baby of it. those chemicals releasing in your brain when you come in to save the day and do a lot of work and you're getting those high fives.

people are looking to you to come in and [00:07:00] rescue certain situations and have all the answers that can feel good even while it can also feel heavy. Yeah. A lot of us getting to this point , was me and credit to the leadership team as well , for shedding ego in a way that can sometimes be really uncomfortable as saying In order for this business to be as strong as possible, we all have to let go of wanting to be the heroes here.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. . Yeah, I feel that a little bit and , I know with me sometimes I struggle to delegate cause it almost feels harder. Oh, but I can just do this task in 10 minutes. Yes. And it'll be done. But that's such a, short term mindset of , if it just took me longer now and I show them how to do it, it's gonna free me up later.

I have trouble getting out of that like right now. Mentality. Yes. Yes. , and it can be really hard. To do. , but I think , when you're planning a vacation and you decide that it's gonna be a vacation where you're really gonna take [00:08:00] time off, that helps make those decisions even easier.

, I think about , my wife who, , Cat has recently decided that, , she is going to, , she just started working with a, , personal fitness trainer. , and she, , wants to get in better shape. She, at the same time, , wants to make sure that she has health goals in a very healthy way. Mm-hmm. . , we both have a lot of mutual friends who have gone down certain rabbit holes.

Do I need to lose a lot of weight quickly? Or having someone in their lives who had told them something that made them feel bad about themselves and that they would feel better about themselves if they hit certain health milestones. And I say all of that because , it was hard for CAT to find a really like healthy, compelling reason.

Mm. To. [00:09:00] takes some action , , and follow , the stuff that her trainer was sending her. , but when we had a vacation scheduled, , that was kind of close enough in the future for her to see, Okay, my actions or inactions today will have a consequence for what I want this vacation to be like.

Mm-hmm. , that might not be the best example here, but , I do think that , it's helpful when you think about, Okay, I wanna go on a, some type of a vacation every six months or every quarter. It can make it easier to make those right decisions. , , as a CEO when you're tempted to just go in and do the thing cuz it'll take you 10 minutes.

Right. It's that long term thought process. And I actually like the vacation example because we went to the beach recently and we loved the place that we stayed, but the walk from our condo to the ocean was like pretty treacherous . Mm. And I had a back injury, so I was kind of struggling, mom.[00:10:00]

in her sixties, so she was struggling and we both were like, you know, even if we book this place again, now we know. What we need to do to prepare so that we can enjoy this walk a little bit more. Mm-hmm. , you know. It's like taking care of yourself now so that you feel better in the future. And it's the same thing in business.

Take the extra time now so that you can take that time off later. , , yeah. It's so true. I love that. I love that. And so, yeah, I mean, in the same time, just to let everyone in on the big secret. Like we're not finished yet with where we wanna be. Yeah. And in a lot of ways I see this vacation that I had as just the beginning of what time off can look like moving forward.

Mm-hmm. , and now I'm on a mission to, carve out that time. Not working for myself, , and being really present with the people that I'm traveling with. , both because I [00:11:00] enjoy it cuz I need it as a human. And because the more I can do that well, the stronger the business becomes. And one of the first things that I said,

, when I went on vacation, , and I was, I think I was taking a Lyft to the airport, , I sent, , a Slack message to my team and I said, , like it feels so good knowing

that I can do this right now. You know about top on this plane. I feel so confident that you guys can all do what you all have to do while I'm gone.

, and it's such a gift to me. , to be able to do this, and I hope that this is a gift that all of you can receive. Mm-hmm. , , moving forward as the business grows because freedom is, I mean, we call , Indie law, , there's a huge value on independence and freedom and so many people of our, on our team, like [00:12:00] they value their free time.

just as much, if not more than they value their take home pay. Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . And so if we can give people that gift of really taking time off when they're off, I think that makes them even stronger workers. It makes them appreciate the time and it makes them, , not as much of a flight risk as their skills get better and they could potentially work for a different company.

Yeah. That's in the last year. or two since you've been helping me so much. I would say that's been one of the biggest differences in my business is instead of having this mentality of like, I need to find this super person that will be the game changer. we want those things, but what's even more important is having a role that anybody can fill so that you can continue to like level up and , put those super people superpowers in higher positions.

And just allow for , that replaceability in the [00:13:00] best way, Right? The systems that make things repeatable so that anybody can jump in and do it is a superpower. And having, we don't want anybody in a team being like, Well, they can't survive without me. , I'm that good. Right. You know? But it's a balance of like, yes.

Like you are amazing and you've changed the trajectory of this business, but you also want those things to be repeatable. Yeah. I mean, there. . I know I've talked about this before, but with my big health scare that I had about a year after I started my business, it was this huge, just shock to reality that if something were to happen to me, our clients would need to be well taken care of and , as great as it is and feels when you realize you're a rockstar in your role.

when you start to think about mitigating risks, that can become a concern. Mm-hmm. , because of something we, we wanna do everything that we can so that the [00:14:00] strength of our business doesn't depend on any one person. Yeah. Yeah. , and how do you, is a line , of, you know, acknowledging these ama because like you have an amazing leadership team, right?

Yeah. And it's like you wouldn't trade that for the world. But it's a balance of we want those amazing, irreplaceable human beings, but we want their role to be Repeat, repeat, repeat. Yeah. Yeah. We want, , I hope and trust that my leadership team knows how grateful everyone is on the team for them.

And how I impressive they are, how much their strengths align with their positions, and at the same time, We, I want whatever their ideal futures, I want them to be able , to make that happen. Mm-hmm. and , I currently am confident that their position on indie law's team aligns with where they want to go, if that [00:15:00] ever changes.

I want there still to be a win-win where we can help them and support them, take some next step away from the law firm, , in a way that doesn't jeopardize the growth of the firm. , Yeah. Well you do such a good job of that. And to me, that's when I really look at like leadership and what that means.

It's being in a space where you know, you're not gonna be kept small, and that just means that you're always putting, you know, their ability to reach their highest potential. Not necessarily over the company, but yes, like you're prioritizing that you want them to reach their max potential and that's leaders that can separate that are one in a million.

Okay. So thank you. I know, I'm like, Let me bring us back in here a little bit. If you had to talk about the trip and , the work life balance and the ability to take this time off, what would be like your biggest like take. Hmm. So actually my biggest takeaway is, not related to anything that we've been talking about,[00:16:00] , but in a lot of ways, I guess it is.

My biggest takeaway would be that. And let me set some context here, because if I say it, you might be like, Joey, that's so random. Why would you say ? , it's never random. , there's always a click back to it. , when I was on vacation within the first few days, I felt this deep sense of pressure, which caught me off.

I wasn't expecting it, but there I was in, you know, these beautiful cities and towns in Portugal and I started feeling this weight of Joey, , you put so much time and energy to prepare you to have this time that you're having right now. And. Make sure that you're maximizing and making the most out of this time that you're getting.[00:17:00]

And I quickly realized that , there is a bad side to that type of pressure and. I now, , I'm curious. I feel like I need to do some research on it to say that if this is like a thing like vacation pressure where when you go on vacation, you have

this, you know, it might not be stress from work, but it's like stress to really milk everything that you can out of this vacation mm-hmm.

and feel like you are leaving with zero regrets. And , there were times when I felt like, oh, . , I need to be appreciating this town that I'm in. , so I can't go for like a nap. I can't go inside and take a little break. , or , I was getting close to the end of this book that I was reading and wanted to see how it ended, but I was like, Yeah, but like the sunset so pretty right now.

Like, I need to be like outside or I need to be walking or need to be whatever. And I think the big takeaway for me was,[00:18:00] , . If the whole point of me being on vacation is just to enjoy that break, then I need to turn off that pressure valve. And to an extent, I probably need to turn it off all the time.

But there is, there is an extent to where that type of pressure is helpful as a business owner, right, To see, okay, how can I be more effective here? How can I make this more productive? , but when it comes to enjoying your time off, getting better and better at turning that voice off in your head. Mm.

Because it's really hard to be present and grateful when you feel like you're not doing as much as you could be doing in the moment. Mm-hmm. . Yep. And that pressure language too. , I know you came up with an actual solution cuz we talked about it before the call, but the, the pressure language too of like, Oh, I need to, I have to, I [00:19:00] must, I need to see this sunset, you know, instead of like, I get to rest and see the sunset or whatever it might be.

Yeah. So tell everyone how you combat. , that pressure and what you ended up learning about yourself in doing? Well, I was very grateful because before I went on the vacation, I discovered this tool that my therapist showed me, , called , a halt exercise and. So I freaking love this because on the one hand, as an attorney, I overthink all the time.

And also as, , a coach who has been trained as a coach with Liz, , I've learned more and more techniques to really unpack what might be going on. And so sometimes when I'm feeling off, I can kind of spiral mentally searching for the root cause , of what's wrong, right? Mm-hmm. , I can like, try and self diagnose myself and it can.

Kind of crazy up there. And that's why I love this halt technique that I learned, which stands for [00:20:00] H A L T. , which means, okay, , if you're feeling off, the idea is to halt and then walk through those four letters. So in my hungry,

am I angry? Am I lonely or am I tired? And if any one of those things sounds like that's the thing, then I can stop.

trying to assess the problem and I can just fix that. And I realized before the trip, after I discovered this , and would think about it for a few weeks, that almost all the time when I was feeling off and I did this Hal exercise, the problem was I was tired. Mm-hmm. , and I'm sure that this is different for everyone, but when I realized, oh, like my main.

Default, just like bodily offness is that I'm not getting enough sleep. , that's something that I can just kind of reconfirm. Mm-hmm. . So I, right before I went on [00:21:00] vacation, I kind of created this, I had done it enough to kind of have this just like mental reframe where if I'm feeling off or crazy, I just kind of give myself permission to go take a quick nap, shut my eyes for a while or whatever, and.

Being able to use that on vacation was such a gift because it allowed me to kind of take that pressure off, especially once I realized, Oh, my problem really is that I'm just tired and it's because I'm tired, that I'm getting hard on myself, that I'm thinking about what could be better or whatever. And , , being able to be more willing to be that guy who.

Is in the room. It's like, you know what, I'm sorry guys. I gonna take a nap earlier. I'm gonna head to bed early tonight or whatever. , sometimes more than others, it was more uncomfortable to, to do that. But I was really appreciative the next day. Mm-hmm. that I did. Yeah. , and the other thing that I did for this trip [00:22:00] that I think was, ,

Something that people know, like my family, , friends that we met on vacation really noted was I committed before we went on vacation to being as flexible as I could be. So, I told myself before I went, you know, if. . If there is somebody who really wants to do something, I'm just going to be willing to go with the flow.

, if there are, I feel like you're gonna go with the flow guy. Was this something like, was this a Joey commitment or did everybody as a group kind of say like, We're be flexible? No, , this was a me commitment and I learned that cuz I realized that even though I can tend to. more of like the peacemaker.

, it's much harder for me to maintain that, , like when I'm traveling mm-hmm. , when I'm off in certain ways. And so to make that commitment of just like, I'm

going to just go with the flow, like I just, I want others to feel like I'm being easy this trip. Mm. , I think that went a long way [00:23:00] because.

I think in a lot of ways traveling and having time off, especially if you're with your family, it can kind of bring out the worst in each other sometimes, unfortunately. Mm-hmm. , and it can resurface those buttons that we as family members know what to push to get on each other's bad sides or whatever.

And so to be the one that, you know, even if there were certain times where I might have been stressed out or upset, , Saying, Okay. First and foremost, I just wanna be seen , as flexible and easygoing this trip, , and take naps as much as I can. , that, that really made a big difference. , yes. Yeah. I love that.

Well, and I love the halts, the halt method, cuz of course I think we're all like going through the letters, like, which one would be us? Right. And I think. I might be the minority here, but for me I think it would be lonely cuz I'm an extrovert and I love to like feel seen and heard, which is probably why I like to make other [00:24:00] people feel seen and heard.

And I just wanna remind people, you know, you can be in a room with people and still feel that hell, that lonely. Yes. If it's not, you're not feeling seen or hurt or whatever it might be. , I'm like, I can be with my kids and 100% still feel lonely. , right? Yeah. Neat. Oh, that's so good. That's so good. . When you do feel that way, especially if you're around people and you're feeling lonely, what do you do or recommend that people do?

So I know , for me, and this always sounds like a little cheesy and weird, but I always like, I really believe in the law of attraction and it sometimes it just means that I might have to be the one that goes and sparks a conversation with somebody else and allows them to feel seen and be heard. , it's so easy as like those networking conversations or about to go to a conference of.

Asking someone, you know, what they do, but like truly like listening to the answer and continuing to ask thought provoking questions. Yeah. And I [00:25:00] find sometimes if I can just be that for somebody else, , that then the relationship or the conversation takes that natural, , like kind of next level of depth that satisfies me.

Mm-hmm. . So sometimes it's just giving someone else that attention that. Craving . Yeah. Oh. But I can't always get from a three year old. It's a different kind of attention, . No , totally. Oh, that's great. That's great. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

So , all of this, , , is just a great conversation around tips to prepare for a vacation or time away, and tips to enjoy that time away.

, I feel like this is a topic doesn't get talked about a ton in the business community, but , if so many of us are building these businesses so that we can have more free time, then I think it makes sense to get really clear about what does your ideal time off really look like? How can you start making.

Progress and little [00:26:00] maybe mini breaks every quarter, , at least every year so that you can work more and more towards what this is like. And I love it because, you know, most people who aren't business owners, they think about this too, but they often think about it in terms of like, retirement, right?

Like there's , this like capital F finish line. That they're working towards them. When they're done, they get to enjoy this free time. As business owners, we have the gift of this kind of semi-retired life, right, where we can plan to take time off throughout the year or every year or whatever it is, without having this like huge retirement space at the.

And so the more that we can get intentional about taking action towards enjoying the, that time off, that we as business owners, we get to have time off , in a flavor that is different than other people. [00:27:00] Mm-hmm. , , , it was very eye opening , to be on vacation and either see my. My wife was also able to time, take time off work.

But she was, you know, there's so much of her business that's outside of her control. , she didn't get everything done that she wanted to get done before she left. And so there, there was this sense the entire time of, ugh, I know my inbox is gonna be crazy when I get back. She almost had toed the trip and she's not even technically a business owner.

Yeah. And then my, I had family who they were working throughout the entire, they had certain calls that they were on. , the nice thing about going somewhere like Europe with enough of a time change is, you know, in the mornings and early afternoons, . It wasn't really work hours back home. Yeah. Yeah.

But then from Midafternoon to the evening, their phones would just be buzzing the [00:28:00] whole time. And me, meanwhile, you're actually able to take the time off. Yeah. I thinks while and while to think about it really is. Well, and when you, I realized how. Weird, and I mean that in a good way. Like weird. We are as business owners to get, to have that type of a gift.

Like , my family, when they saw that I was totally unplugged, like it was so foreign to them. Mm-hmm. , they were like, Joey, do you like, we're proud of you, but we also wanna ask you like, . Do you actually have a business that's running right now or is this all made up? Are you making money? Did you hit pause?

Yes. Did you give your team off because you won't be there to run it . Right. It, I mean it's something that I think a lot of people want and admire and respect when they see, but there's also this sense that it seems impossible to reach. Mm-hmm. and I'm just very grateful to have mentors.

colleagues who have [00:29:00] done this themselves , and made it clear that kind of a thing is possible. Yeah, Yeah. It's crazy what becomes possible when you see someone two steps ahead of you that can do it. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I love that. So, one last question because , I feel like we've gotten a little bit of this, like, what would you say.

To anyone that might be watching or that's, you're really becoming this go-to expert in team building, rightfully so. I'm like pushing you out there as much as possible. But what do you say to the mentality that's like, oh, like here's just another business owner like sitting around while his team does all the work and you know, Is there , any fear or feelings around putting yourself out there as this, you know, team building expert knowing that there are judgements and criticisms out there?

Yeah, well, on the one hand, like I very much wanna [00:30:00] listen to those concerns and I do wanna have an open, transparent conversation with my team and I have about, you know, what do you guys think about the idea of me taking time off? . , and hearing what they say, , they talk about it, right? Like put it out there that you are taking time off while they run the business.

, yes. , and I think , what I hear so much from my team is, , well, and in our team was a little different, but like right now, almost all of our team is part-time. Yeah. So, They see me taking time off as just an extension of the time that the fact that, you know, everyone on the team really does have a large sense of time freedom.

Mm-hmm. and Liz, like you and I have talked about this before, like I'll say that I spend. An hour a week doing client work. I definitely spend more than that throughout the week in team meetings, working on stuff, whatever. , [00:31:00] if I didn't then I wouldn't really need to take vacation, cuz I like would always be on vacation

, and so I think , there's that sense where the team sees that in a lot of ways. I'm usually put putting in. A lot of time and these vacations , are time for me to enjoy that freedom the way that they are. The other thing too is that everyone on our team wants that gift of real time off the way that I have.

Mm-hmm. and we are creating systems in a culture where it's not just me as the CEO who gets to take time off. We're creating an environment where everyone gets to have weeks off if they want, and that they're supported in doing so.

Mm-hmm. , and so , there's really coverage across the board there so that, , everyone feels like they're supported , and , can do that.

, I, it's not lost on me that there is this sense , and maybe even more so [00:32:00] now with the internet being what it is of, you know, an entrepreneur's dream of total passive income. You have automations in a team doing stuff while you're just sleeping all day. , the reality is, , most business owners actually have the opposite problem.

Mm-hmm. , they are. Unwilling to trust and delegate team members and so they as just as a human, you have to be careful because usually if you see people having a life that you want but can't have, you assume that person did something ethically wrong to get there. Yeah. Yeah. Because then that allows you to be right and them to be wrong, and you get to be a good person and something is wrong with them.

, that's very normal. Like, it's just, it's a part of the way, of the way that our brains are hardwired as a defense mechanism. Mm-hmm. . , but it's, I think it's worth thinking about that , if you find yourself kind of mentally bashing someone who's a few [00:33:00] steps ahead of you or who has reached a milestone in business that, , you wish you could have for yourself, if you are criticizing them or looking down on.

There may be very valid reasons for that, but it's worth checking, you know, is a part of this really just coming from a place of, , me having what they want and there being a bit of envy or jealousy or, , Man, it just, it seems like I've worked hard, Like I've done so many things to get there and it's not happening.

So there must be something that they're doing that is crossing a line that allows them to have , what they have here. Yeah. Yeah. That's so true. I've had both edge of the spectrum, and I tell you, I'd much rather work for somebody who can take time off than someone who's a micromanager.

Because the opposite extreme of a boss who never takes time off is usually because their hands are in too many of [00:34:00] the pots. Right. You know, , there's so much freedom for your team and knowing that you don't have to be their puppet master. That is such a good point. Whether I'm on vacation or not, , I've gotten my own.

, wrists slapped before on my team when they're like, No, Joey, like, you can't get in the weeds on this. Like, yeah, we don't like it as the team. You're messing up our systems. Like we now are doing this better than you were when it was you doing all of this stuff. And , the team is more effective at getting this done when you're not involved.

Yeah, and I think sometimes there's a misconception. What the CEO role is really intended to be, right? Like, yeah. Because the team is doing some of these repeatable tasks, doesn't mean that they're less valuable or. That the CEO should be doing them, like the best, you know, businesses have , that visionary, that person that continues to dream big and think of , those big goals.

So yeah. Yeah. I think sometimes there's just a misconception of what a [00:35:00] CEO should really be doing. . Yeah. Yeah. You know, But leading and development are what they should be focusing on. How can they be the best leader they can be? Right? A hundred percent. Such a fun conversation. I love it. And you're, you know, you're doing such a good job and I just love seeing you continue to show up in this space knowing that team building is like one of the less popular, , things that people will invest in when it comes to education and you know, like just seeing you like still continue , to row in that direction.

Despite that the numbers have told us that, Right? , but it's so important. It's so important. Wow. Thank you so much, Liz, for your time, , for asking such great questions. As always, thanks to everybody tuning in live, , on the replay or on the podcast. , if you are tuning into the video and you have any questions, concerns, things that you'd like Liz and I to tackle in the future.

Feel free [00:36:00] to comment, , there, and if you're listening to the podcast or this is trigger anything, , we should have , some details in the show notes so we can get ahold of us as well. Make sure that you're joining the Facebook group, the Business Growth Advantage, , where. Liz and I are going live, what is it, every other week at this point?

Every other, Yeah, I think so. I think every other week on now we switched it to Tuesdays. Yes. Yes. So see you guys on Tuesdays. You're, If you're taking that

time off, let us know too so we can cheer you on. Yes, a hundred percent.
Thanks, Joey. Thanks, Liz.